



# Bay Area “Transportationese”

**I**n MTC’s world, HIP doesn’t mean “cool,” TLC doesn’t offer “tender loving care” and “ice tea” is not a drink. The business of transportation, like many other industries, professions and government agencies, is full of acronyms, abbreviated names and jargon. If you’d like to become fluent in “transportationese,” here’s a list of terms to start you on your way.

**511** 511 is a 24-hour, toll-free phone and Web service (511.org) that consolidates Bay Area transportation information into a one-stop resource. 511 provides up-to-the-minute information on traffic conditions, public transit routes and schedules, carpool and vanpool referrals, bicycle routes and more. 511 is managed by a partnership of public agencies, led by MTC, the California Highway Patrol and Caltrans. When MTC activated the 511 phone number in 2002, the region became the first in the state to implement a free, phone-based traveler information service.

**ABAG Association of Bay Area Governments** A voluntary association of counties and cities that is the general planning agency for the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area. Also provides demographic, financial, administrative, training and conference services to local governments and businesses. ABAG appoints a representative to sit on the Commission.

## **ADA Americans With Disabilities Act**

Federal civil rights legislation for disabled persons passed in 1990; calls on public transit systems to make their services more fully accessible, as well as to underwrite a parallel network of paratransit service.

## **BAAQMD Bay Area Air Quality Management District**

(Also known as the Air District, since the acronym seems to take longer to say than the full name.) Regulates industry and employers to keep air pollution in check and sponsors programs to clean the air. The Air District works with MTC and the Association of Bay Area Governments on issues that affect transportation, land use and air quality.

## **BATA Bay Area Toll Authority**

Entity created by the state Legislature to administer the base \$1 toll from the Bay Area’s seven state-owned toll bridges. Now oversees all toll revenue from the seven toll bridges. MTC began operations as BATA on January 1, 1998.

**Bay Area Partnership** Often referred to simply as “The Partnership,” this is a confederation of the top staff of various transportation agencies in the region (MTC, public transit operators, county CMAs, city and county public works departments, ports, Caltrans, U.S. DOT, etc.) as well as environmental protection agencies. The Partnership works by consensus to improve the overall efficiency



and operation of the Bay Area's transportation network, including developing strategies for financing transportation improvements.

**BCDC San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission** A state-established agency with jurisdiction over dredging and filling of San Francisco Bay and limited jurisdiction over development within 100 feet of the Bay. BCDC appoints a representative to sit on the Commission.

**CAA Clean Air Act** Federal legislation that requires each state with areas that have not met federal air quality standards to prepare a State Implementation Plan, or SIP. The sweeping 1990 amendments to the CAA established new air quality requirements for the development of metropolitan transportation plans and programs. The California Clean Air Act (or CCAA) sets even tougher state goals.

**Caltrans California Department of Transportation** The state agency that operates California's highway system.

**Capital Funds** Moneys dedicated for new projects to cover one-time costs, such as construction of roads or transit lines and facilities, or purchase of buses and rail cars.

**CHP California Highway Patrol** State law enforcement agency responsible for highway safety, among other things.

### **CMA Congestion Management Agency**

A county-level agency responsible for preparing and implementing a county's Congestion Management Program. CMAs came into existence as a result of state legislation and voter approval of Proposition 111 in 1990. Subsequent legislation made optional the requirement for counties to have a CMA. All Bay Area counties have them.

**CMAQ Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program** A pot of federal money for projects and activities that reduce congestion and improve air quality, both in regions not yet attaining federal air quality standards and those engaged in efforts to preserve their attainment status.

**Conformity** A process in which transportation plans and spending programs are reviewed to ensure that they are consistent with federal clean air requirements; transportation projects collectively must not worsen air quality.

**CTC California Transportation Commission** A state-level commission, consisting of nine members appointed by the governor, that establishes priorities and allocates funds for highway, passenger rail and transit investments throughout California. The CTC works with the state Business, Transportation and Housing Agency in overseeing Caltrans, and participates in the development of state and federal legislation that affects transportation funding.

**Environmental Justice** The term stems from a 1994 presidential executive order to promote equity for disadvantaged communities and promote the inclusion of racial and ethnic populations and low-income communities in decision-making. Local and regional transportation agencies must ensure that services and benefits, as well as burdens, are fairly distributed to avoid discrimination.

**EPA Environmental Protection Agency** Federal department responsible for researching and setting national standards for environmental quality. The EPA works with other federal, state, local and regional agencies to issue permits, monitor compliance and enforce environmental laws.

**Equity Analysis** Consistent with federal requirements for environmental justice, MTC conducts an equity analysis covering the 25-year Regional Transportation Plan to determine how the benefits and burdens of the plan's investment strategy affect minority and low-income communities.

**FasTrak®** The electronic toll collection system used on the Bay Area's seven state-owned toll bridges and the Golden Gate Bridge. FasTrak® customer service operations are managed by the Bay Area Toll Authority.

**FHWA Federal Highway Administration** U.S. Department of Transportation agency responsible for administering the federal highway aid program to individual states, and helping to plan, develop and coordinate construction of federally funded highway projects. FHWA also governs the safety of hazardous cargo on the nation's highways.

**Flexible Funding** Unlike funding that flows only to highways or only to transit by a rigid formula, this money can be invested in a range of transportation projects. Examples of flexible funding categories include the Surface Transportation Program, and the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (both federal).

**FTA Federal Transit Administration** U.S. Department of Transportation agency that provides financial and planning assistance to help plan, build and operate rail, bus and paratransit systems. The agency also assists in the development of local and regional traffic reduction programs.

**HIP Housing Incentive Program** An incentive program initiated by MTC in 2000 that provides seed money to municipalities and their development partners to encourage the development of compact residential communities near public transit hubs.

**HOT Lane High-Occupancy/Toll Lane** A designated lane that motorists driving alone can use if they pay a toll, allowing them to avoid traffic delays in the adjacent regular lanes. HOT lanes usually are combined with high-occupancy-vehicle (HOV or carpool) lanes that have enough capacity to handle more vehicles. Toll-paying drivers and toll-free carpools/vanpools share the lane, increasing the number of total vehicles using the HOV/HOT lane and generating revenues that can be used for transportation improvements.

**HOV Lane High-Occupancy-Vehicle Lane** The technical term for a carpool lane, commuter lane or diamond lane.

**Intermodal** The term “mode” is used to refer to and to distinguish from each other the various forms of transportation, such as automobile, transit, ship, bicycle and walking. Intermodal refers specifically to the connections between modes.

### **ISTEA Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act**

Pronounced “Ice Tea,” this landmark federal legislation signed into law in 1991 initiated broad changes in the way transportation decisions are made. ISTEA emphasized diversity and balance of modes, as well as the preservation of existing systems before construction of new facilities. ISTEA expired in 1997, but much of its program structure was carried forward in successor federal legislation (see “TEA 21” and “SAFETEA”).

**ITIP Interregional Transportation Improvement Program** A state funding program intended to address needs that cross metropolitan boundaries. Caltrans nominates and the CTC approves a listing of interregional highway and rail projects for 25 percent of the funds to be programmed in the STIP. (The other 75 percent are RTIP funds; see below.)

**ITS Intelligent Transportation Systems** Technical innovations that apply communications and information processing to improve the efficiency and safety of ground transportation systems. In the Bay Area, ITS initiatives include closed-circuit video monitoring of freeway traffic conditions and the use of automatic vehicle location technology to provide real-time transit and traffic information to the 511 telephone and Web-based information service. ITS initiatives are also used to coordinate traffic signals and speed emergency vehicle response times.

**JPC Joint Policy Committee** Created by state law to coordinate regional planning efforts in the Bay Area, the JPC includes representatives from MTC, ABAG, BAAQMD and the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC).

### **Lifeline Transportation Network**

An MTC initiative to enhance low-income residents’ access to key destinations such as job centers, government buildings and medical facilities during both peak commute periods and off-peak hours. While most of the Lifeline network identified by MTC is already served by existing transit routes, some low-income communities and/or destinations are not served by transit or lack service at specific times of day. MTC is working with transit operators and potential funding partners to fill these gaps in the network, whether by transit or other options such as car-sharing.

**MPO Metropolitan Planning Organization** A federally required body responsible for the transportation planning and project selection in its region; the governor designates an MPO in every urbanized area with a population of over 50,000. MTC is the Bay Area’s MPO.

**Operating Funds** Moneys used to fund general, day-to-day costs of running transportation systems. For transit, costs include fuel, salaries and replacement parts; for roads, operating costs involve maintaining pavement, filling potholes, paying workers’ salaries, and so forth. (See “Capital Funds.”)

**Paratransit** Door-to-door bus, van and taxi services used to transport elderly and disabled riders. Sometimes referred to as dial-a-ride service, since trips are made according to demand instead of along a fixed route or according to a fixed schedule.

#### **PMS Pavement Management System**

This cooperative effort between MTC and more than 100 local jurisdictions evaluates options for improving the maintenance of local streets and roads. MTC provides its own StreetSaver™ computer software and technical assistance to help cities and counties extend the life of pavement and thus stretch local budgets further.

**Program** (1) *verb*, to assign funds to a project that has been approved by MTC, the state or other agency; (2) *noun*, a system of funding for implementing transportation projects or policies, such as through the State Transportation Improvement Program (see “STIP”).

**Proposition 1B** (also known as the Infrastructure Bond) – Passed by 61 percent of the voters in November 2006, Proposition 1B authorizes the state to issue a \$20 billion general obligation bond for a variety of transportation improvements.

**Proposition 42** A statewide initiative approved in 2002 that requires gasoline sales tax revenues to be dedicated to transportation purposes. In FY 2006-07, Proposition 42 funds are estimated to provide approximately \$1.4 billion statewide. In November 2006, the voters passed a subsequent initiative, Proposition 1A, which provides greater assurance that these funds will go to transportation. Proposition 1A allows

the funds to be loaned to the General Fund only twice in a 10-year period and requires that funds be repaid within three years prior to making a second loan.

**Resolution 3434** (also known as the Regional Transit Expansion Program) – A list of high-priority rail and express bus improvements to serve the Bay Area’s most congested corridors. MTC adopted Resolution 3434 in December 2001 to establish clear priorities for the investment of transit expansion funds.

**RM 1 Regional Measure 1** Passed by Bay Area voters in 1988, RM 1 increased tolls (which at the time varied by bridge) on the region’s seven state-owned bridges to a uniform \$1. Revenues generated by the toll increase were dedicated by RM 1 to fund certain highway and bridge improvements, public transit rail extensions, and other projects that reduce congestion in the bridge corridors.

**RM 2 Regional Measure 2** A ballot measure instituting a \$1 bridge toll increase passed by Bay Area voters in March 2004. The expenditure plan funds 37 capital projects, with an emphasis on transit improvements in the bridge corridors, as well as a dozen transit operating projects to enhance service along the bridge corridors.

**RTIP Regional Transportation Improvement Program** A listing of highway and transit projects that the region hopes to fund; compiled by MTC every two years from priority lists submitted by local jurisdictions. The California Transportation Commission (CTC) must either approve or reject the RTIP list in its entirety. Once the CTC approves an RTIP, it is combined with those from other regions to comprise 75 percent of the funds in the STIP (see below).

### **RTP Regional Transportation Plan**

A blueprint to guide the region's transportation development for a 25-year period. Updated every four years, it is based on projections of growth in population and travel demand coupled with financial projections. Required by state and federal law.

### **RTPA Regional Transportation Planning Agency**

A state-designated agency responsible for preparing the Regional Transportation Plan and the Regional Transportation Improvement Program, administering state funds, and other tasks. MTC is the Bay Area's RTPA.

### **SAFE Service Authority for Freeways and Expressways**

As the region's SAFE, MTC – in partnership with the California Highway Patrol and California Department of Transportation – oversees the installation and operation of call boxes along Bay Area freeways and administers a roving tow truck service (Freeway Service Patrol) to quickly clear incidents from the region's most congested roadways. State legislation in 1987 created the MTC SAFE, which is funded in part through a \$1 surcharge on motor vehicle registrations.

### **SAFETEA Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act**

A multiyear federal transportation bill, signed into law by President George W. Bush on August 10, 2005. The bill authorizes \$255.5 billion in funding for federal surface transportation programs over five years. SAFETEA maintains the program structure of its predecessor, TEA 21, but provides a much higher number of earmarks for special projects chosen by Congress. SAFETEA is distinguished by its emphasis on safety, including a federal Safe Routes to School Program, and new flexibility for states to develop high-occupancy/toll (HOT) lanes.

### **SHOPP State Highway Operation and Protection Program**

State funding program for highway projects that will improve traffic safety; preserve bridges, roadways and/or roadsides; increase mobility; or improve facilities related to the state highway system. It is adopted on a four-year schedule. Pursuant to state law, the SHOPP receives priority in funding before funds are made available to the STIP.

### **SIP State Implementation Plan**

Here's a case where one term refers to two different – albeit related – documents. Metropolitan areas prepare regional SIPs showing steps they plan to take to meet federal air quality standards (outlined in the Clean Air Act). Several SIPs make up the statewide plan for cleaning up the air, also known as a SIP.

**Smart Growth** A set of policies and programs designed to protect, preserve and economically stimulate established communities, while protecting valuable natural and cultural resources and limiting sprawl.

**SOV Single-Occupant Vehicle** A vehicle with one occupant, the driver, who is sometimes referred to as a “drive alone.”

**Spare the Air** Program established by BAAQMD to educate people about air pollution and to encourage them to curtail emissions by driving less, taking public transportation, carpooling, walking, biking and other measures. Spare the Air season runs from June 1 through October 13. MTC partners with BAAQMD and Bay Area transit operators to offer free fares on the season's first several Spare the Air days in an effort to increase transit ridership and reduce emissions from driving.



**STA State Transit Assistance** Provides funding for mass transit operations and capital projects.

**STIP State Transportation Improvement Program** What the CTC ends up with after combining various RTIPs as well as a list of specific projects proposed by Caltrans. Covering a five-year span and updated every two years, the STIP determines when and if transportation projects will be funded by the state.

**STP Surface Transportation Program** One of the key federal funding programs. STP moneys are “flexible,” meaning they can be spent on mass transit and pedestrian and bicycle facilities as well as on roads and highways.

**TCM Transportation Control Measure** A strategy to reduce driving or to smooth traffic flows in order to cut auto emissions and resulting air pollution. Required by the Clean Air Act, TCMs for the Bay Area are jointly developed by MTC, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District and ABAG. Examples of TCMs include roving tow truck patrols to clear stalls and accidents from congested roadways, new or increased transit service, or a program to promote carpools and vanpools.

**TCRP Traffic Congestion Relief Program** A five-year state transportation investment plan passed by the California Legislature and signed into law in 2000. The plan originally called for \$6.8 billion of spending (with \$1.7 billion to the Bay Area) from fiscal 2000-01 to 2005-06, but subsequent refinancing agreements postponed the funding until fiscal 2002-03 to 2007-08.

**TDA Transportation Development Act** State law enacted in 1971. TDA funds are generated from a tax of one-quarter of one percent on all retail sales in each county; used for transit, special transit for disabled persons, and bicycle and pedestrian purposes, they are collected by the state and allocated by MTC to fund transit operations and programs. In nonurban areas, TDA funds may be used for streets and roads under certain conditions.

**TDM Transportation Demand Management** Low-cost ways to reduce demand by automobiles on the transportation system, such as programs to promote telecommuting, flextime and ridesharing.

**TEA Transportation Enhancement Activities** A federal transportation funding category. Ten percent of STP moneys must be set aside for projects that enhance the compatibility of transportation facilities with their surroundings. Examples of TEA projects include bicycle and pedestrian paths, restoration of rail depots or other historic transportation facilities, acquisition of scenic or open space lands next to travel corridors, and murals or other public art projects.

**TEA 21 Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century** Passed by Congress in 1998, TEA 21 retained and expanded many of the programs created in 1991 under ISTEA. The law reauthorized federal surface transportation programs for six years (1998-2003), and significantly increased overall funding for transportation. Its successor is SAFETEA.

**TETAP Traffic Engineering Technical Assistance Program** An MTC initiative that provides local jurisdictions with traffic engineering assistance and expertise on projects to improve traffic flows on major arterials.

### **TIP Transportation Improvement**

**Program** This is the primary spending plan for federal funding expected to flow to the region from all sources for transportation projects of all types. The TIP must be updated at least once every four years. It covers a four- or five-year period.

**Title VI** Refers to Title VI of the Federal Civil Rights Act of 1964, and requires that transportation planning and programming be nondiscriminatory on the basis of race, color and national origin. Integral to Title VI is the concept of environmental justice.

### **TLC Transportation for Livable**

**Communities** Funding program created by MTC in 1998 to fund small-scale, community- and transit-oriented projects that improve neighborhood vitality.

### **TMC Transportation Management**

**Center** A centralized regional facility for notifying travelers of current traffic and roadway conditions through various media including radio and TV reporters, roadway message signs, and highway advisory radio. The TMC and the regional Traffic Operations System (see “TOS” below) reflect the growing importance of system management and intelligent transportation systems in combating roadway congestion. The Bay Area TMC, which is partially funded by MTC, is located in the Caltrans District 4 headquarters building in Oakland.

### **TOD Transit-Oriented Development**

A type of development that links land use and transit facilities to support the transit system and help reduce sprawl, traffic congestion and air pollution. It calls for locating housing, along with complementary public uses (jobs, retail and services) at strategic points along a transit line.

**TOS Traffic Operations System** In the Bay Area, Caltrans and the CHP monitor traffic flows by means of detectors embedded in pavement and closed-circuit television cameras, quickly dispatching tow trucks and other assistance. Message signs and broadcasts alert drivers and transit riders to conditions ahead, while ramp metering controls traffic flows. All these devices together comprise the TOS. (See also “TMC.”)

**TransLink®** MTC’s prototype for a universal ticket valid on all transit modes, from BART to buses to ferries. Translink® went into service in the fall of 2006 on AC Transit buses and Golden Gate Transit buses and ferries. TransLink® smart card technology can provide a broad range of services beyond transit fares, including payment for parking meters, telephone calls, retail purchases and perhaps even Internet purchases.

### **U.S. DOT United States Department of Transportation**

The federal cabinet-level agency with responsibility for highways, mass transit, aviation and ports; headed by the secretary of transportation. The DOT includes the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration, among others. There are also state DOTs (known as Caltrans in California).

### **VII Vehicle Infrastructure Integration**

VII is a major ITS (see entry) initiative. The goal of VII is to provide a communications link between vehicles on the road, and between vehicles and the roadside infrastructure, in order to increase the safety, efficiency, and convenience of the transportation system.